Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 13 with the following rewritten paragraph:

> Fig. 1 shows a comparison of *L. delbrueckii* operator~~promoter~~ sequences (O1 and O2). Arrows are for inverted repeats. The LL44 sequence is numbered according to Figure 1. Sequence of the second helix of *lacR* (repressor) is indicated.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 15 with the following rewritten paragraph:

> Fig. 2 shows the organization of the promoter region of the *L. delbrueckii* LL44 and LB68 *lac operon*. Operators O1 and O2 are indicated by darkened boxes. The inverted repeats of the operators are represented by arrows. The sequence responsible for catabolite repression (CRE) is overdrawn by stars. The promoter sequence of LL44 is numbered according to Figure 1.~~;~~

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 17 with the following rewritten paragraph:

> Fig. 3 shows the organization of the promoter region of the *L. delbrueckii* N299 *lac operon*. Operators O1 and O2 are indicated by darkened boxes. The inverted repeats of the operators are represented by arrows. The sequence responsible for catabolite repression (CRE) is overdrawn by stars. The inverted repeat of ISL5 is boxed and shaded. The initiation of transcription is shown by an i (arrow head) (Leong-Morgenthaler et al., 1991).~~;~~

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 19 with the following rewritten paragraph:

> Fig. 4 shows the nucleotide and amino acid sequence of the *L. delbrueckii* subsp. *lactis* LL44 *lacR* gene. Start (121) and stop (1119) codons are boxed. Putative *lacR* RBS is underlined. The putative rho-indepedent terminator is underlined by convergent arrows. Stop codons of the beta-galactosidase (*lacZ*) and Asn t-RNA synthetase (*asnA*) genes are boxed. Insertion sequence of ISL*3* is represented by a large open arrow. Single base pair deletion (722) in the mutant LZL102 is shown by an arrow head, leading to a premature stop codon (758) underlined.~~;~~

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 22 with the following rewritten paragraph:

> Fig. 5 shows a physical map of the lactose operon of different *L. delbrueckii* strains. Open arrows are for the *lac* operon genes, and dashed arrow is for inactivated *lacR*. Boxes are for the different IS-elements, where the arrows heads are for the inverted repeats. The * indicates that LB68 has the same sequence as LL44 except an insertion in the 5' and of the *lacA* gene.;

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 24 with the following rewritten paragraph:

> Fig. 6 shows a schematic representation of the construction of pLL62. The darkened box is for LL44 *lacR* gene, and the white box is for the promoter region of the *lacI* gene of pET11c. Both were linked by PCR amplification using the SOEing method.;

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 26 with the following rewritten paragraph:

> Fig. 7 shows a schematic representation of the construction of a pLL110 and pLL112 (CNCM I-2089). Dashed arrows are for the genes of the *L. delbrueckii lac* operon, and open arrows for plasmid genes. The darkened box is for the promoter region cloned in front of the *gusA* gene. Plasmids are not drawn to scale. The simple arrows represent the primers used to amplify the cloned regions.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 29 with the following rewritten paragraph:

> Fig. 8 shows a schematic representation of the construction of pLL113, pLL115 (CNCM I-2090) and pLL116 (CNCM I-2091). Dashed arrows are for the genes of the *L. delbrueckii lac* operon, and open arrows for plasmid genes. The open box containing arrow heads represents the IS-elements. The darkened box is for the promoter region cloned in front of the *gusA* gene. Plasmids are not drawn to scale. The simple arrows represent the primers used to amplify the cloned regions.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 1 with the following rewritten paragraph:

> Fig. 9 shows the results of the expression of B (lacta) B-glucuronidase using the constructs of the present invention. Beta-glucuronidase activity (mean of three experiments) of *Lactococcus lactis* MG1363 containing different *Lactobacillus delbrueckii lac* promoter and the *lacR* gene of LL44. The *lacR* orientation compared to the *gusA* gene is represented by an arrow. The medium used was M17 containing: 0.5% mannose, 0.05% lactose, 0.2% lactose, 0.5% lactose, 1.0% lactose, 0.5% glucose, 0.5% glucose + 0.5% lactose, and 0.5% glucose + 1.0% lactose.;

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 4 with the following rewritten paragraph:

> Fig. 10 shows the results of experiments, wherein constructs of the present invention were used to express β-galactosidase in *L. delbrueckii*. Beta-galactosidase activity (mean of three experiments) of *Lactobacillus delbrueckii* subsp. *lactis* LL44 and *L. delbrueckii* subsp. *bulgaricus* N299. The medium used was BHI-broth containing: 0.5% galactose, 0.05% lactose, 0.2% lactose, 0.5% lactose, 1.0% lactose, 0.5% glucose, 0.5% glucose + 0.5% lactose, and 0.5% glucose +1.0% lactose. Strain N299 did not grow either in galactose alone or in 0.5% lactose, and the experiment was not realized with these sugars.

Please replace the Sequence Listing with the Sequence Listing attached herewith.